

Message Text

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ACTION SCI-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 EA-11 IO-14 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-07 SP-03

SS-20 RSC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00 PA-04

USIA-15 PRS-01 L-03 EB-11 COME-00 DRC-01 /141 W

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P R 290955Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3597

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY MANILA

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

CINCPACREP GUAM

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TOKYO 9871

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TPHY XE JA

SUBJ: TYPHOON MODIFICATION RESEARCH: PROJECT STORMFURY

REF: STATE 128792

SUMMARY: EMBASSY HAS PRESENTED US PLANS FOR TRANSFER OF PROJECT STORMFURY TO WEST PACIFIC TO GOJ AGENCIES, WHICH NOW HAVE MATTER UNDER CONSIDERATION. GOJ VIEWS WERE NOT EXPLICITLY REQUESTED, BUT AGENCIES WERE ADVISED THEY WOULD BE WELCOME ON BASIS OF INFORMAL COMMENTS MADE BY DIRECTOR OF JAPAN METEOROLOGICAL AGENCY, EMBASSY BELEIVES THAT GOJ IS LIKELY TO EXPRESS STRONG OPPOSITION TO CONDUCT OF STORMFURY IN WEST PACIFIC. END SUMMARY.

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1. SCICOUNS HAS DISCUSSED WITH KEITARO MOHRI, DIRECTOR JAPAN METEOROLOGICAL AGENCY (JMA) AND FONOFF, PROPOSED TRANSFER OF PROJECT STORMFURY TO PACIFIC IN 1976 AND 1977. EMBASSY CONCLUDED THAT MOST APPROPRIATE APPROACH TO GOJ, GIVEN BACKGROUND OF JAPANESE SENSITIVITY TO PROJECT, WOULD BE TO INFORM THEM OF PLANS AND TO REFRAIN FROM OUTRIGHT REQUEST FOR VIEWS, WHILE MAKING IT CLEAR THAT ANY VIEWS WHICH GOJ WISHED TO EXPRESS WOULD BE MOST WELCOME. THIS APPROACH WAS INCORPORATED INTO TALKING PAPER (COPIES OF WHICH BEING POUCHED TO SCI) LEFT WITH AGENCIES, TOGETHER WITH TECHNICAL BACKGROUND INFO PROVIDED BY DEPT.

2. AS MIGHT BE EXPECTED, JMA DIRECTOR WAS QUITE FAMILIAR WITH PROJECT AND DESCRIBED JAPANESE VIEWS IN SOME DETAIL. HE EMPHASIZED THAT HIS STATEMENTS WERE INFORMAL VIEWS OF A TECHNICAL AGENCY, AND THAT OFFICIAL JAPANESE REACTION TO PROPOSAL WOULD COME FROM FONOFF AFTER COORDINATION WITH OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES. HE EXPLAINED THAT GOJ HAS FORMED AN INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE ON WEATHER MODIFICATION RESEARCH, HEADED BY FONOFF AND INCLUDING JMA AND CONSTRUCTION MINISTRY (WHICH IS RESPONSIBLE FOR WATER SUPPLY, LANDSLIDE PROBLEMS, ETC.). AND THAT THIS COMMITTEE WOULD BE MECHANISM FOR FORMAL GOJ REVIEW.

3. MOHRI BEGAN BY NOTING THAT JMA HAD RECENTLY BEEN VISITED (JULY 20) BY PHILIPPINE OFFICIAL (REYES), WHO APPARENTLY WAS ON MISSION TO SEVERAL COUNTRIES OF AREA SEEKING SUPPORT FOR STORMFURY. MOHRI EXPLAINED THAT, AS TECHNICAL AGENCY, JMA NATURALLY HAS SCIENTIFIC INTEREST IN IMPROVING KNOWLEDGE OF TYPHOONS AND IN TYPHOON MODIFICATION. HE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT THERE ARE TWO SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT ON HOW THIS RESEARCH GOAL MIGHT BEST BE APPROACHED: BY FURTHER NUMERICAL MODELING, OR BY "OPERATIONAL" RESEARCH, SUCH AS THAT PROPOSED IN STORMFURY. MOHRI CLAIMED THAT AT WMO MEETINGS, THERE SEEMED TO BE A CLEAR MAJORITY OF THOSE WHO PREFERRED FIRST COURSE FOR TIME BEING. HE ALSO PROVIDED SCICOUNS WITH COPY OF JULY 8, 1974, WMO MEMORANDUM (R/CLA/1), ON CONFIDENTIAL

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PRESENT STATE OF KNOWLEDGE ON WEATHER MODIFICATION, WHICH INCLUDES STATEMENT THAT "OPERATIONS SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN ONLY AFTER MOST CAREFUL STUDY BY EXPERTS OF THE PARTICULAR SITUATION ..." MOHRI CITED THIS STATEMENT AS SUPPORT FOR HIS VIEW THAT OPERATIONAL PHASE OF WEATHER MODIFICATION RESEARCH STILL PREMATURE, DESPITE FACT THAT US IS, OF COURSE, MAKING CAREFUL STUDY CALLED FOR BY WMO STATEMENT.

4. MOHRI SAID THAT HEART OF PROBLEM FOR JAPANESE IS THAT, IN EVENT OF CHANGES THAT PROJECT STORMFURY RESULTED IN DAMAGE TO JAPAN, THERE IS INSUFFICIENT KNOWLEDGE ON WHICH JMA COULD CONVINCE PUBLIC THAT CHARGES WERE UNFOUNDED. POTENTIAL DAMAGES WHICH MOHRI REFERS TO ARE OF TWO KINDS: STORM DAMAGE, AND ECONOMIC LOSSES DUE TO REDUCED RAINFALL. IN THIS REGARD, JAPAN DEPENDS HEAVILY ON RAINFALL EITHER ASSOCIATED WITH OR INDUCED BY TYPHOONS FOR AUTUMN RAINFALL WHICH IS VITAL TO BOTH AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRY. MOHRI ALSO ATTACHED IMPORTANCE TO ESSENTIALLY EMOTIONAL ISSUE THAT "ARTIFICIAL" MODIFICATION OF NATURE IS IMPROPER.

5. MOHRI SAID THAT, IN PRINCIPLE, JAPAN DID NOT OBJECT TO TYPHOON SEEDING EXPERIMENTS SO LONG AS THEY INVOLVED ONLY THPHOONS NOT HEADED TOWARD JAPAN. HOWEVER, WHEN SCICOUNS INQUIRED WHETHER THIS MEANT GOJ WOULD SEE NO PROBLEM IN EXPERIMENTS UNDER CONSERVATIVE SAFETY RULES OUTLINED IN REFTTEL, HE EXPLAINED REMARK BY SAYING THAT, SINCE NOONE KNOWS WITH CERTAINTY WHERE TYPHOON WILL GO, ANY EXPERIMENT PERFORMED ON TYPHOON WHICH ULTIMATELY REACHES JAPAN WOULD RAISE ISSUE OF POSSIBLE DAMAGE, EVEN IF SAFETY RULES HAD BEEN FULLY COMPLIED WITH. MOHRI ALSO RAISED LIABILITY ISSUE, NOTING THAT THERE ARE "SOME PERSONS" WHO FEEL THAT ANY COUNTRY WHICH ENGAGES IN WEATHER MODIFICATION SHOULD BEAR EXPENSES OF DAMAGE WHICH IT CAUSED. SCICOUNS NOTED THTA THIS SUBJECT UNDER REVIEW.

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6. IN MEETING WITH FONOFF (WATANABE OF 2ND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AFFAIRS DIV, ECONOMIC AFFAIRS BUREAU), WATANABE CONFIRMED THAT GOJ REACTION TO US PLANS WOULD REQUIRE CONSULTATION WITH INTERESTED AGENCIES, IDENTIFYING IN THIS CONNECTION MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, IN ADDITION TO JMA AND MIN OF CONSTRUCTION. SCICOUNS STRESSED ONCE AGAIN THAT US WAS NOT REQUESTING FORMAL RESPONSE, RECOGNIZING THAT SUCH REQUEST MIGHT PLACE GOJ IN POSITION IT WOULD PREFER NOT TO BE IN, BUT WOULD WELCOME COMMENTS IF GOJ WISHED TO MAKE ANY.

7. EMBASSY COMMENT: WHIILE NEITHER MOHRI NOR WATANABE WERE EXPLICIT IN SAYING THAT GOU WOULD COMMENT ON CONFIDENTIAL

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STORMFURY PLANS, AND SCICOUNS DID NOT SEEK TO COMMIT THEM TO PROVIDE COMMENTS, EMBASSY EVALUATION IS THAT GOJ WILL TAKE FORMAL AND PROBABLY STRONG EXCEPTION TO STORMFURY TRANSFER, ON BASIS OF REASONS CITED BY MOHRI. AS DEPT AND NOAA MAY BE AWARE, GOJ SENSITIVITY TO WEATHER MODIFICATION IS TRACEABLE IN PART TO DISASTROUS EXPERIMENT CONDUCTED IN NOVEMBER 1971, IN WHICH ARTIFICIAL LANDSLIDE WAS DELIBERATELY INDUCED AS PART OF SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM KILLING 15 AND INJURING TEN OTHERS. STRONG PUBLIC AND PARLIAMENTARY REACTIONS TO FIASCO HAS TENEDED TO CONDITION OFFICIAL JAPANESE ATTITUDES TOWARD EPXERIMENTS INVOVING MODIFICATION OF NATURAL PEHNOМЕНA EVER SINCE. AS NOTED, EMBASSY AVOIDED DIRECT REQUEST FOR JAPANESE VIEWS IN HOPE THAT BEST CHANCE FOR RECEIVING GOJ ACQUIESCENCE WOULD BE TO ALLOW GOJ TO TAKE POSITION, VIS-A-VIS JAPANESE PUBLIC AND DIET, THAT IT WAS MERELY INFORMED OF EXPERIMENTS. HOWEVER, CARRYING THIS POSITION TOO FAR BY NOT WELCOMING AND TAKING INTO ACCOUNT JAPANESE VIEWS, COULD HAVE SERIOUS

REPERCUSSIONS.

8.

WHILE EMBASSY IS PESSIMISTIC AT PROSPECTS FOR JAPANESE ACQUIESCENCE, WE BELIEVE BEST CHANCE FOR SECURING THIS WOULD BE STRONG SUPPORT FOR EXPERIMENTS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES IN REGION, PARTICULARLY ON GROUNDS OF THEIR NEED TO SECURE RELIEF FROM DEATH-DEALING TYPHOONS. LOGIC OF US UNDERTAKING POTENTIALLY HIGH RISK (AS SEEN BY JAPANESE) EXPERIMENTS IN WEST PACIFIC, WHILE ESCHEWING SIMILAR EXPERIMENTS IN AREAS CONTIGUOUS TO US IS HARDLY LIKELY TO BE CONVINCING TO JAPANESE PUBLIC, DESPITE SCIENTIFIC EXPLANATION PROVIDED IN REFTEL. ON OTHER HAND, EXPRESSIONS BY OTHER WESTERN PACIFIC NATIONS THAT JAPANESE OPPOSITION TO EXPERIMENTS WILL INTERFERE WITH THEIR CHANCE OF OBTAINING RELIEF FROM TYPHOONS COULD APPEAL TO JAPANESE SENSIBILITIES AND CARRY SOME WEIGHT.

9. NTIEHER JMA NOR FONFF COMMENTED ON US OFFER TO PROVIDE METEOROLOGICAL EXPERT. EMBASSY BELIEVES SUCH EFFORT ARE USEFUL STEP IN RIGHT DIRECTION, AND WILL
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ENCOURAGE ACCEPTANCE OF OFFER BY GOJ, BUT FOR REASONS STATED ABOVE, THIS TECHNICAL ADVOCACY WOULD HAVE GREATEST IMPACT IN CONTEXT OF STRONG SUPPORT FOR EXPERIMENT FROM OTHER NATIONS IN REGION.
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